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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 002044

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/SPG, EUR/NCE, AND CA/OCS/ACS/AF

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/29/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [CASC](#) [SALOPEK](#) [PAUL](#) [SU](#) [SI](#) [AS](#)

SUBJECT: DARFUR: SLOVENIAN HUMAN RIGHTS
ACTIVIST/PRESIDENTIAL ENVOY ABUSED IN PRISON

REF: LJUBLJANA 533

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES CAMERON HUME; REASON: 1.4(B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) Slovenian/Australian human rights activist and presidential envoy Tomo Kriznar has faced "harsh treatment" since his July arrest in Darfur, Slovenian Consul from Cairo Andrej Dernovscek told Con/Poloff on August 28 in Khartoum. A court in El Fashir, North Darfur, convicted Kriznar on August 14 of entering Sudan without a visa, espionage, and publishing "false news." The same court is currently considering similar charges against U.S. citizen Paul Salopek, a journalist for the Chicago Tribune and National Geographic.

¶2. (C) Kriznar has been held for several weeks at Shallah Prison, a high security facility near El Fashir. U.S. citizen Ethan Rafal, who shared a prison cell with Kriznar on August 17 after his own conviction for illegal entry, later told Con/Poloff Kriznar had been "tortured," though Rafal did not elaborate. According to Dernovscek, who visited Kriznar on August 26-7, Kriznar had been beaten after he was initially arrested, but his current conditions have improved considerably. The prison director and guards have been extremely kind, Kriznar told Dernovscek privately, but Dernovscek is still concerned that Kriznar is becoming suicidal.

¶3. (C) Dernovscek complained that the German Embassy in Khartoum, which represents Slovenian interests in Sudan as holder of the EU Presidency, had not been helpful in advancing Kriznar's case. The German and French ambassadors had blocked a joint EU member state demarche on Kriznar's behalf, and the German Embassy had refused to allow Dernovscek to use its office phones. The British Embassy, however, had been more helpful, possibly due to Kriznar's status as a dual Slovenian/Australian citizen. (The U.K. represents Australian interests in Sudan, on behalf of the Australian Embassy in Cairo).

¶4. (C) COMMENT: Though Dernovscek did not formally ask for U.S. assistance, Con/Poloff did brief him on the Salopek and Rafal cases, and passed along the names of several government and legal contacts who might be helpful. As noted reftel, Slovenia may well ask for the U.S. to use its own good offices with the Government of Sudan on Kriznar's behalf. Post will help informally as much as possible, but our priority clearly remains with the Salopek case. END COMMENT.
HUME